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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 31, 2020, at 10 a.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2020

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our gracious King, You are the one clear power of love in the midst of lesser powers. Thank You for giving us the confidence that You hear and answer prayers.

Lord, use the Members of this body as ambassadors of reconciliation. Help them to bring wholeness, healing, and unity to a fragmented nation and world. Inspire them to discover Your love in each other and to see Your image in all creation.

Lord, settle our Senators down into a contemplative stillness that will make them yearn for righteousness, justice, and peace. May they speak wise words from a reservoir of wisdom that will transform discord into harmony.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The majority leader is recognized.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today, the Senate was supposed to finish legislation securing critical tools, training, and support for America's Armed Forces, but the junior Senator from Vermont had other ideas.

Remember, Senator SANDERS spent last summer, literally, trying to defund our military. Not my words, but the title of a piece he published: "Defund the Pentagon: The Liberal Case." Our colleague offered an amendment to strip 10 percent of funding from our servicemembers and decimate our defense budget. The Russians aren't cutting military funding. China isn't cutting funding. But last summer, Senator SANDERS and fellow Democrats, including the Democratic leader, voted to make America unilaterally disarm and cut ours.

The left took a break from trying to defund the police to try to defund our Armed Forces. Their amendment went down in a landslide, but now our colleague from Vermont is again putting political stunts before the needs of our men and women in uniform.

Our colleague says he will slow down this vital bill unless he gets to muscle through another stand-alone proposal from Speaker PELOSI that would add roughly half a trillion dollars to the national debt, which does not align with what President Trump has suggested and which has no realistic path to quickly pass the Senate.

Well, as I have said, the Senate will not let our national security be shoved off course, certainly not by Senators who have spent years—literally years—

trying to gut America's capabilities while our adversaries continue ramping up. The Senate will stay on this important bill until we complete it one way or another.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now let's talk about COVID-19 relief. Four days ago, President Trump signed the second largest rescue package in American history. The largest one was the CARES Act back in March. Due to this pandemic and our massive response, we now have a national debt far larger than our entire economy for the first time since World War II, but we knew our people needed more help, so Congress just passed another nearly \$900 billion in emergency relief targeted to those who need it most, a second round of payroll support to save small business jobs, more unemployment aid, vaccine distribution money, funding for safe schools, and much more.

In addition to historic amounts of targeted help at the request of President Trump and his team, the package also included another round of direct checks to households, whether or not each household needs the help, whether or not their finances have changed dramatically this past year.

Yesterday, Secretary Mnuchin announced households should begin receiving these payments as early as today and this week. That is more good news to a lot of people.

After Congress and the administration finalized the bipartisan bill, the President expressed interest in further

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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